

A Chinese Nightmare

The pro-Chinese Indian Communists have publicly voiced fears about an Indian-Pakistani settlement directed against Communist China and supported by both the United States and the Soviet Union. Such a settlement would obviously be a nightmare both for Peking and the pro-Peking Indian Communists.

So far as Peking is concerned, it has a considerable interest in maintaining Indian-Pakistani hostility as a means of weakening India and driving Pakistan closer to China. A settlement between India and Pakistan would leave India in a much stronger position to face up to China and would remove the strong incentive Pakistan now has to move closer to Peking in order to achieve its ends in Kashmir.

So far as the pro-Peking Indian Communists are concerned, an Indian-Pakistani settlement directed against China would constitute a political catastrophe. So long as China and India are at loggerheads, the pro-Chinese Indian Communists, most of whose leaders have been jailed, are unable to operate freely, much less successfully.

The United States and the Soviet Union, for different reasons, both have an interest in an Indian-Pakistani accommodation. The United States wants such a modus vivendi so that the subcontinent will be in a position to contain Chinese expansionism. The Soviets, for their part, have an interest in removing both Chinese and Western influence from the subcontinent and substituting their own. To accomplish this, they are playing a delicate game of wooing both India and Pakistan simultaneously, a game that cannot work under conditions of permanent tension between the two.

In short, only the Chinese and their Indian Communist allies have a vested interest in keeping the Indo-Pakistani pot boiling. The question is whether or not farsighted leaders in both India and Pakistan will be able to recognize this fact and to act upon it. If India wants to face the Chinese challenge effectively, and to establish itself as the major power in south and southeast Asia, it will have to display vision and magnanimity in its future relations with Pakistan. Pakistan, on the other hand, will have to reconcile itself to the fact that it cannot achieve parity with India as an Asian power.